



# Virginia Commonwealth University

June 16, 1970

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics  
Stanford University  
Palo Alto, California

Dear Professor Lederberg:

Having read of your recent commendable public statements concerning the need for a national genetics task force, and recognizing that you will be asked to provide advice on these subjects in the future, I am writing to offer you a viewpoint on the importance and relative neglect of one hereditary illness, sickle cell anemia.

To this end, I am enclosing a copy of a manuscript soon to be published in the Journal of the American Medical Association which discusses the the question of health care priority for sickle cell anemia. The article shows data demonstrating low priority for sickle cell anemia and also includes arguments for mass screening of young Negroes for sickle trait. A satisfactory test for sickle trait has been available for many years but has never been applied widely. We believe that we can demonstrate that electrophoresis of hemoglobin can be used as a mass screening technique and in an economically feasible fashion. It can also be shown with some rough estimates that even moderate success in genetic counselling can make the cost of a mass screening program a good investment of health care dollars.

I hope that you will give some thought to the data in the enclosed manuscript, and I would appreciate hearing from you any comments or suggestions you might have on effective approaches in developing this concept of nationwide screening for sickle trait.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert B. Scott".

Robert B. Scott, M. D.  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Director, Laboratory for  
Hematological Research

RBS/lg

Enclosure